

A conversation between Dr. Jordan B. Peterson and Dr. Camille Paglia

Discussed topics include: Western Civilization, Postmodernism, Academia, Art, Literature, History, Biology, Psychology, Gender, Parenting, Free Speech

Transcribed and edited by Eric B. Hutchinson

Notes: I have done my best to format this spoken conversation for the sake of reading. As expected, small but important alterations were required to bring colloquially spoken words to paper.

Those alterations are as follows:

1. I omitted stutters and interjections such as 'um' or 'you know' or 'like' for obvious reasons regarding legibility and ease of reading.
2. Any use of ellipsis (. . .) indicates the cessation or abandonment of a complete sentence, and **does not** represent an omission of words.
3. Brackets are used to insert words which might not be necessary to the flow of conversation but which aid the understanding of the text.

Recorded conversation: <https://youtu.be/v-hIVnmUdXM>

Peterson: I've really been trying to understand the underlying psychology of postmodernism and its relationship with neo-Marxism, and then the spread of that into the universities and the effect on the culture. What I would like to start with is a description of your understanding, because I've presented to the people who are listening to me my understanding of it.

I interviewed Stephen Hicks recently, and he wrote an interesting book called *Explaining Postmodernism*, which I liked quite a bit. It's been criticized for being too right-wing, although I don't think he's right-wing at all. I think maybe you could characterize him as middle-of-the-road conservative. But I would say he's more like a classic liberal.

But I'm really curious about your views about what postmodernism is, first of all. I know you've identified it with the general tricksters Jacques Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault. And Foucault in particular you've talked about. But I'd like to know what you think about postmodernism, and also why you think it's been so attractive to people.

Paglia: Well, my explanation is that there is no authentic 1960s point of view in any of the elite universities. Rather, the most liberated minds of my generation - the 1960s - did not go on to graduate school. I witnessed this with my own eyes. I saw genuine Marxists at my college, which was the State University of New York at Binghamton, upstate New York, Harper College, which had huge cohorts of very radical downstate New York Jews. In fact, Harper used to be called Berkeley East.

I saw genuine, passionate Marxists with my own eyes. They were not word choppers. They were not snide postmodernists. They were in your face, aggressive. They used the language of the people. They had a populist energy. They dressed working class. They were non-materialistic. These are people who lived by their own convictions. They were against the graduate schools.

When I went on to graduate school, and it became known that I was going to go to Yale, I was confronted by a leader of the radicals on campus in broad daylight in front of everyone, who denounced me. He said, "Grad school is not worth happening. You don't do that. If you have to go to graduate school, you should go to Buffalo."

Now I had applied to Suny Buffalo because the great leftist critic Leslie Fiedler was there, who had a huge impact on me. He created Identity Politics, but without its present distortions. And Norman Holland, the psychoanalytic critic, was there. I would have been very happy to have gone on to Buffalo. But I needed the library at Yale, so I continued on to Yale.

There were no radicals in the graduate schools from 1968 to '72 when I was there. Only one radical, Todd Gitlin, went on to have career success. The actual radicals of the 1960s either went off, dropped out of college and went off to create communes, or they were taking acid and destroyed their brains. Now I have also written about that - the destruction of the minds of the most talented members of my generation through

LSD. It was going on all around me.

So what's happened is the actual legacy of the 60s got truncated. The idea that these post-structuralists and postmodernists are heirs of the 1960s revolution is an absolute crock.

What they represent, as Foucault shows. . . Foucault said that the biggest influence on his thinking was Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which was a post World War II play written in Paris that was about the disillusionment and nihilism experienced after Hitler went through, occupied France, and all of Europe was in ruins.

It had nothing to do. . . What's in *Waiting for Godot* has nothing to do with the authentic legacy of the 1960s, which was about genuine multiculturalism; a movement toward India, toward Hinduism; a transformation of consciousness through psychedelics, which I did not take but which I identify with totally; through the music, etc. It was a turn toward the body. It was a turn toward sensory experience, not this word chopping thing and this like cynical removal from actual experience.

That French import came in to the graduate schools. It did not affect any genuine 1960s person. The real 1960s revolution was about Jung. It was about a way of seeing the cosmos in mythological terms, and the Jungian contribution went on into the New Age movement of the 1970s, aside from the universities.

So who took over the universities were these careerists. I saw them with my own eyes. I saw what happened. I was at Yale when Derrida was being shipped over to address the students, the grad students, and the faculty. I said to a fellow student after hearing one of these guys speak. . . It wasn't Derrida. It was another one of the theorists. I said, "They are like high priests murmuring to each other." This was an elitist form from the start. It was not progressive. It was not revolutionary. It was reactionary. It was a desperate attempt to hold on to what had happened before the 1960s sensory revolution.

This postmodernist thing, this trashing of the text, this encouragement of a superior and destructive attitude toward the work of art. . . "We're going through it primarily with red pen in hand finding all the evidence of sexism - check - racism - check - homophobia - check." That is not the empathic, emotional, sensory-based revolution of the 1960s. I am sick and tired of these people claiming any kind of mantle from the 1960s. They're frauds.

What happened in the 1970s was a collapse of the job market in academe. All of the sudden jobs were scarce, and this thing was there, the new and improved and shiny thing: to be a theorist. People seized on it, it was institutionalized, and it's an enormous betrayal of the 1960s.

Peterson: You touched on this idea of the destruction of the work of art. And one of things I really like about reading Nietzsche was his discussion of *ressentiment*, of

resentment. And it seems to me that a tremendous amount of the motive power that drives the postmodernist. . . Let's call it - it's not a revolution - transformation seems to me to be driven by resentment about virtually anything that has any - well, what would you say - any merit of competence or aesthetic quality.

And I don't know if that's. . . It seems to me that that's partly rooted in the academic's disdain for the business world, which I think is driven by their relative economic inequality. Because most people who are as intelligent as academics are, from a pure IQ point of view, make more money in the private sphere, and so I think that drives some of it.

But there also seems to be this - there's a destruction, an aim for destruction, of the aesthetic quality of the literary or artistic work, its reduction to some kind of power game, and, surrounding that, the reduction of everything to something that approximates a power game. Which I can't help but identifying with jealousy and resentment as a fundamental motivator. Does that seem reasonable to you?

Paglia: These professors who allege that art is nothing but an ideological movement by one elite against another group - these people are Philistines. They're Philistines. They're middlebrow, hopelessly middlebrow. They have no sense of beauty, they no sense of the aesthetic.

Now Marxism does indeed assert this. Marxism tries to reconfigure the universe in terms of materialism. It does not recognize any kind of spiritual dimension. Now, I'm an atheist, but I see the great world religions, as enormous works of art, as the best way to understand the universe and man's place in it. I find them enormously moving. They're like enormous poems. And what I have called for - the true revolution would have been to make the core curriculum of world education - the world, okay - the great religions of the world. I feel that is the only way to achieve an understanding, and it's also a way to present the aesthetic. I feel that the real 60s vision was about exultation, elevation, cosmic consciousness. All of these things were rejected by these midgets, intellectual midgets, who seized onto Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault. My career has been in the art schools. My entire career, beginning at Bennington College. So I represent a challenge to this from the perspective of art. It is absolute nonsense, as post-structuralism maintains, that reality is mediated by language, by words. Everything we can know, including gender. It is absolutely madness. Because I'm teaching students whose majors are ceramics or dance, who are jazz musicians, who understand reality in terms of the body and sensory activation.

See what happened was, something was going on in the art world as well. I identify with Andy Warhol and pop art. That was what was going on during my years in college. Everything about Andy Warhol was like "Wow!" Admiration. Wow. What happened immediately after that in the arts, 1970s, was this collapse into a snide sort of postmodernism also. This happened in the art world. It was an utter misunderstanding of culture, it seems to me, by that movement in the art world. That is, oppositional art, in my view, is dead. What postmodernism is is a pathetic attempt to continue the old

heroism of the avant-garde. The avant-garde was genuinely heroic from the early 19th century. We're talking about Courbet, the realists. We're talking about Monet and the impressionists. People who have genuinely suffered for their radical ideas and their innovations. Going right down to Picasso and down to Jackson Pollock, who truly suffered for his art. It was only after his death that suddenly the market was created for abstract art. Pop art killed the avant-garde. The idea that the avant-garde continues is an absolute delusion of the contemporary art world, which feels that they must attack, attack, attack. Challenge the simplistic beliefs of the *hoi polloi*. Excuse me. From the moment Andy Warhol and embraced the popular media instead of having the opposition to it that serious artists had had, that was the end of oppositional art.

So we have been going on now for fifty years. The postmodernism in academe is hand-in-hand with the stupidity and infantilism that masquerades as important art at galleries everywhere. This incredible, incredible mechanism of contemporary art pushing things that are so hopelessly derivative, with this idea once again that the art world has a superior view of reality. Authentic leftism is populist. It is based in working class style, working class language, working class direct emotion, in an openness and [inaudible] of speech. Not this fancy, contorted jargon of the pseudo-leftists of academe, who are frauds.

These people who managed to rise to the top at Berkeley, at Harvard, at Princeton - how many of these people are radical? They are career people. They're corporate types. They love the institutional context. They know how to manipulate the bureaucracy, which has totally invaded and usurped academe everywhere. These people are company players. They could have done well in any field. They love to sit in endless committees. They love bureaucratic regulation and so on.

Not one 'leftist' in American academe raised his or her voice against obscene growth of tuition costs, which have bankrupted a whole generation of young people - not one voice to challenge that invasion by the bureaucrats, absolute fascists bureaucrats. They're cancerous. There are so many of them. The faculty have completely lost any power in American academe. It's a scandal what has happened. And they deserve the present servitude that they're in right now, because they never protested.

My first job at Bennington College, 1976. I was there when there was an uprising by the faculty, against the encroachment by the board of trustees and the president. It was a huge thing. It was reported on the New York Times. And we pushed that president out. And there's not been a single uprising of that kind against encroachment by the trustees and by the administrations. All these decades. Passive. Slaves, slaves, they deserve their slavery.

Peterson: Yep. I couldn't agree more. I've thought the same thing about university professors for a long time. They get exactly what they deserve because they never stand up and say no. And the fact that in the United States - it's not quite as bad in Canada, I wouldn't say. . . . But the fact that the students have been essentially handed a bill of indentured servitude here for their student loans is absolutely beyond

comprehension.

It seems to me that the bureaucracy has basically conspired to determine how to pick the pockets of the students' future earnings. And they do that by offering them an extended adolescence with no quality control. Something like that. So it's a real bargain with the devil.

Paglia: And a total abandonment of any kind of education, actually, in history and culture that has come along with it. The transformation into a cafeteria kind of a menu where you can pick this course or that course or this course without any kind of guidance from the university about a central core curriculum that teaches you history and chronology, and introduces you to the basics. Because our professors are such prima donnas, they can only teach in their little areas. So we have this total fragmentation.

The great art history survey courses are being abandoned steadily. Why? Because graduate students are not trained to see the great narratives, because we are taught now that narratives are false.

Peterson: That's another issue I want to bring up, because one of the things I cannot figure out is the alliance between the postmodernists and the neo-Marxists. I can't understand the causal relationship. Tell me if you disagree with this, okay, because I'm a psychologist, not a sociologist. So I'm dabbling in things that are outside of my field of expertise. And there is some danger in that.

But the central postmodernist claim seems to me that because there's a near infinite number of ways to interpret a complex set of phenomena, which actually happens to be the case. You can't make a case that any of those modes of interpretation are canonical. And so, if they're not canonical, and if that canonical element isn't based in some kind of reality, then it serves some other master.

And so the master that it hypothetically serves for the postmodernists is nothing but power, because that seems to be everything they believe in. They don't believe in competence. They don't believe in authority. They don't seem to believe in an objective world, because everything is language-mediated. So it's an extraordinarily cynical perspective: that because there's an infinite number of interpretations, none of them are canonical. You can attribute everything to power and dominance.

Does that seem like a reasonable summary of the postmodern. . .

Paglia: Yes, exactly. It's a radical relativism.

Peterson: Okay, it's a radical relativism. Now, but the strange thing is, despite. . . Okay, and so what goes along with that is the demolition of grand narratives. So that would be associated, for example, with the rejection of thinkers like Jung and Erich Neumann, because of course they're foundational thinkers in relationship to the idea

that there are embodied grand narratives. That's never touched.

But then, despite the fact that the grand narrative is rejected, there's a neo-Marxism that's tightly, tightly allied with postmodernism that also seems to shade into this strange identity politics. And I don't. . . Two things. I don't understand the causal relationship there. The skeptical part of me thinks that postmodernism was an intellectual. . . It's intellectual camouflage for the continuation of the kind of pathological Marxism that produced the Soviet Union, and has no independent existence as an intellectual field whatsoever. But I still can't understand how the postmodernists can make the "no grand narrative" claim, but then immerse themselves in this grand narrative without anyone pointing out the evident contradictions. I don't understand that. So what do you think about that?

Paglia: Well I can only speak about literary professors, really, and they seem to me, almost universally in the U.S., to be very naive. They seem to know nothing about actual history, political science, or economics. It's simply an attitude. They have an attitude. Marxism becomes simply a badge by which they telegraph their solidarity with a working class that they have nothing to do with.

Peterson: And generally nothing but contempt for.

Paglia: Yes, and the thing is that the campus leftists are almost notorious for their rather snobbish treatment of staff. They don't have any rapport with the actual working class members of the infrastructure: the janitors and even the secretaries. There's a kind of high and mighty aristocracy.

These are people who have wandered into the English departments and are products of a time, during the New Criticism, when history and psychology had been excluded. My ambition was. . . I loved the New Criticism as a style of textual analysis. And the New Criticism had multiple interpretations that were possible and that were encouraged.

In fact, one of the great projects was Maynard Mack's series *Twentieth Century Views*, where you had these books. . . I adored them in college. It was about Jane Austen or about Emily Brontë or about Wordsworth. And they were collections of alternate views of the same thing. The idea that there were no alternate views, and there was no relativistic, situational kind of an interpretive approach is nonsense.

But the point was we needed to restore history to literary study, and we needed to add psychology to it, because there was great animus against Freud. When I arrived in graduate school, in fact, I actually went into the director of graduate studies and protested the way 'Freud' and 'Freudian' were used as negative terms in a sneering way by the very WASP professors.

Actually, it seemed like we were moving there. The early 1970s was a great period of psycho-biography about political figures. So I thought, 'It's happening.' All of a sudden

it all got short-circuited by this arrival of post-structuralism and postmodernism in the 1970s.

So I feel I am an old historicist, not a new historicist. I think new historicism is an absolute scam. It's just a way. . . It's like tweezers. You pick a little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of that. You make a little tiny salad, and somehow this atomized thing is supposed to mean something. It's all, to me, very superficial, very cynical, very distant. I am the product of old historicism, of German philology. My first choice of a profession when I was a child was Egyptology, archeology. Everything I ever think about or say is related to an enormous time scheme, from antiquity and indeed from the Stone Age.

And that is the problem with these people. They're mal-educated. The postmodernists and academic Marxists are mal-educated, embarrassingly so. They know nothing before the present. Foucault is absolutely a joke before the Enlightenment. Perhaps he might be useful to people to talk about what happened after neoclassicism, which, by the way, he failed to notice.

A lot of what he was talking about turns out to be simply the hangover of neoclassicism. This is how ignorant that man was. He was not talented as a researcher. He knew absolutely nothing. He knew nothing about antiquity. How can you make any kind of large structure, large mechanism, to analyze Western culture without knowing about classical antiquity? He did not see anything. This was a person who had no business making large theoretical statements about anything.

Peterson: Maybe part of it is that if you generate an intelligible doctrine of radical relativism, then there is no reason to assume that there are distinctions between categories of knowledge, or between different levels of quality of knowledge.

I've seen the same thing in the psychology departments, although we have the - what would you call it - the luxury of being bounded at least to some degree by the empirical method and by biology. It's one of the things that keeps most of the branches of psychology relatively sane, because the real world is actually built into it to some degree.

But if you accept the postmodernist claim of radical relativism, then you completely demolish the idea that there are quality levels that are associated with education, because everything becomes the same. And that seems to me to be a perfectly reasonable justification for maintaining ignorance.

You know Foucault, I actually found him the most readable of the Lacan, Derrida, Foucault triad. You can read Foucault. I read *Madness and Civilization* and a couple of his other books, and I thought that they were painfully obvious. The idea that mental disorder is in part a social construct is self-evident to anybody who has even a smattering of psychiatric training.

The real narrow medical types tend to think of a mental disorder, let's say, as something that might be purely biological. They have a pure disease model. But nobody who's a sophisticated thinker ever thinks that. Partly because medicine is a brand of engineering, not a brand of science, because it's associated with health, and the diagnostic categories are hybrids between physiological observation and socio-cultural condition. Everyone knows that. So when I read *Madness and Civilization* I thought, well that's not radical, that's just bloody self-evident.

Paglia: Well, you know Foucault's admirers actually think that he began the entire turn toward a sociological grounding of modern psychology. Social psychology was well launched in the 1920s. The levels of ignorance that this people who think Foucault is so original have not read Durkheim, they've not read Max Weber, they've never read Erving Goffman. So in other words, to me everything in Foucault seemed obvious, because I had read the sources from which he was borrowing without attribution.

Again, I know these people. I, in some cases, knew them in graduate school - people who went on to become these admirers of Foucault, Lacan, Derrida. And I know what their training was. Their training was purely within the English department. That's all they ever knew. They never made any research outside of that.

Foucault is simply this mechanism. It's like a little tiny kit by which they can approach everything in culture. But the contortions of language, the deliberate labyrinth of elitist language, at the same time as pretending to be a leftist? This is one of the biggest frauds ever practiced.

Peterson: So I got a story to tell you that you might like because I've thought a lot about that use of language. Because language can be used as camouflage, and so here's the story. I think I got this from Robert Sapolsky. So he was talking about zebras, and zebras of course have stripes. And hypothetically that's associated with camouflage.

But it's not a straightforward association because zebras are black and white, and they're on the veldt along with the lions. The lions are camouflaged because they're grass colored, but the bloody zebras are black and white. You can see them like 15 miles away.

So biologists go out to study zebras, and they're making notes on a zebra. And they watch it, then they look down at their notes, and then they look up. But they think, 'Uh oh, I don't know which zebra I was looking at.' The camouflage is actually against the herd because a zebra is a herd animal, not an individual. So the black and white stripes break up the animal against the herd, so you can't identify it.

So this was a quandary for the biologists, so they did one of two things. One was drive a jeep up to the zebra herd, and use a dab of red paint and dab the haunch of the zebra, or tag it with an ear tag like you use for cattle. The lions would kill it. So as soon

as it became identifiable the predators could organize their hunt around that identifiable animal.

That's why there's the old idea that lions and predators take down the weak animals, but they don't. They take down the identifiable animals. So that's the thing: if you stick your damn head up, you get picked off by the predators. One of the things that academics seem to do is congregate together in herd-like entities, and then they share a language. And the language unites them.

As long as they share the same set of linguistic tools among themselves, they know that there isn't anybody in the coterie that's going to attack them or destabilize the entire herd. And that seems to me to account for that impenetrable use of language. It's group protection strategy. It has absolutely nothing to do with the search for. . . It's the search for security within a system and not the desire to expand the system.

Paglia: So true. To me it's blatantly careerist because it was about advancement, and it was also about the claim that somehow they have like special expertise. This is a special technical language. No one else can understand it. Only we can.

But what's absurd about it, absolutely ludicrous, is that these people, these American academics, are imitating the contorted language of translations from the French. When Lacan is translated into English, there's a contortion there. What he was trying to do in French was to break up the neoclassical formulations that descended from [Jean] Racine.

There was something that was going on - there was a sabotage of the French language that was going on - that was necessary in France, not necessary in English. We have this long tradition of poetry going back to Shakespeare and Chaucer. We have our own language, far more vital than the French.

Peterson: Oh yeah, the French constrain their language all the time by bureaucracy.

Paglia: That's right. So the amateurism of American academics trying to imitate a translation of Lacan when Lacan is doing something in France - that is absolutely not necessary, and indeed wrong to be doing in English. The utter cynical abandonment of the great tradition of the English department.

I felt that the true radicalism was not about adding on other departments, so we have African American studies and Women's Studies and so on. The true radicalism would have been to shatter the departmental structure. That's what I wanted. I feel that was the authentic revolutionary 1960s thing to do: to blend all the literature studies together, to make easier, to make an interdisciplinary kind of organization closer to the British model, where a person can pursue related subjects, overlapping subjects.

These departmental models were to me totalitarian to begin with, separating language into fiefdoms. To create a Women's Studies department absolutely out of the air. Just

snap your fingers and create Women's Studies. The English department had taken a century to develop. There was a huge argument within it, and all of the sudden to create a department with a politicized agenda from the start by people without any training whatever in that field.

What should be the parameters of the field? What should be the requirements of that field? How about biology? If you're going to be discussing gender, that should have been a number one requirement as part of any Women's Studies department or program. But no. It was all hands off. It was just [that] the administrators wanted to solve a public relations problem.

They had a situation with very few women faculty nationwide at a time when the women's movement had just started up. That spotlight of attention was on them. They needed women faculty fast. They needed the women's subject on the agenda fast. So they just like 'poof, let there be Women's Studies.' And now we'll just hire some women, usually from English departments, here and there, and we'll just throw them together. You invent it, you say what it is.

So that's why Women's Studies got frozen at a certain point of ideology of the early 1970s. I was already in revolt from it. I was a precursor in terms of my endorsement of feminism before it even now was created. But I couldn't even have a conversation with any of these women. They were hysterical about the subject of biology. They knew nothing about hormones. I probably got in fistfights over this. People were so convinced that biology had nothing to do whatever with gender differences.

Peterson: See that also seems to me to be related to the postmodern emphasis on power because there's something terrible underground going on there. And that is. . . I think this is the sort of thing that was reflected in the Soviet Union, too. Especially in the 20s when there was this idea, a radical idea, that you could remake human beings entirely because they had no essential nature.

So, if your fundamental hypothesis is that nothing exists except power, and you believe that, then that also gives you the right in some sense to exercise your power at the creation of the kind of humanity that your utopian vision envisions. And that also seems to me to justify the postmodern insistence that everything is only a linguistic construct. It again goes down to the notion of power, which Derrida and Foucault and Lacan are so bloody obsessed with.

It seems to me what they're trying to do is to take all the potential power for the creation of human beings to themselves without any bounding conditions whatsoever. There's no history, there's no biology, and everything is a fluid culture that can be manipulated at will.

In Canada there are terrible arguments right now about biological essentialism, let's say. And one of the things that happened, which was something I objected to precisely a year ago, is that the social constructionist view of human identity has been built

now into Canadian law. So there's an insistence that biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual proclivity vary independently with no causal relationship between any of the levels.

And so that's in the law, and not only is it in the law, it's being taught everywhere. It's being taught in the Armed Forces, it's being taught in the police, it's being taught to the elementary school kids, and the junior high school kids. And underneath it all I see this terrible striving for arbitrary power that's associated with this crazy utopianism.

But I still don't exactly understand it. I don't understand what seems to be the hatred that motivates it that you see bubbling up, for example, in identity politics, and in the desire to do nothing but, let's say, demolish the patriarchy.

It kind of reminds me. . . And this is something else I wanted to talk to you about. You're an admirer of Erich Neumann and of Carl Jung. The Neumann connection is really interesting because I think he's a bloody genius. I really like *The Great Mother*. It's a great book and really a great warning, that book. And also *The Origins and History of Consciousness*.

Paglia: One my most influential books.

Peterson: Yeah well that's so interesting. I read an essay that you wrote. I don't remember when it was.

Paglia: It was a lecture I gave on Neumann at NYU, yes.

Peterson: Yes, it's always been staggering to me that that book hasn't had the impact that it should have had. I mean Jung himself, in the preface to that book, wrote that that was the book that he wished that he would have written. It's very much associated with Jung's *Symbols of Transformation*. And it was a major influence on my book, *Maps of Meaning*, which was an attempt to outline the universal archetypes that are portrayed in the kind of religious structures that you put forward.

But the thing that I really see happening. . . And you can tell me what you think about this. In Neumann's book, consciousness - which is masculine, symbolically masculine for a variety of reasons - is viewed as rising up against the countervailing force of tragedy from an underlying feminine, symbolically feminine, unconsciousness. And it's something that can always be pulled back into that unconsciousness.

The microcosm of that would be the Freudian Oedipal Mother familial dynamic where the mother is so overprotective and all-encompassing that she interferes with the development of the competence not only of her sons but also of her daughters, of her children in general. And it seems to me that that's the dynamic that's being played out in our society right now.

And it's related in some way that I don't understand to this insistence that all forms of

masculine authority are nothing but tyrannical power. So the symbolic representation is Tyrannical Father with no appreciation for the Benevolent Father, and Benevolent Mother with no appreciation whatsoever for the Tyrannical Mother.

I thought of ideologies as fragmentary mythologies. That's where they get their archetypal and psychological power. In a balanced representation you have the Terrible Mother and the Great Mother, as Neumann laid out so nicely. And you have the Terrible Father and the Great Father. So that's the fact that culture mangles you have to death while it's also promoting you and developing you. You have to see that as balanced. Then you have the heroic and adversarial individual.

But in the postmodern world - and this seems to be something that's increasingly seeping out into the culture at large - you have nothing but the Tyrannical Father, nothing but the destructive force of masculine consciousness, and nothing but the benevolent Great Mother.

It's an appalling ideology, and it seems to me that it's sucking the vitality - which is exactly what you'd expect symbolically - it's sucking the vitality of our culture. You see that with the increasing demolition of young men, and not only young men, in terms of their academic performance. They're falling way behind in elementary school, way behind in junior high, and bailing out of the universities like mad.

Paglia: Well the public school education has become completely permeated by this kind of anti-male propaganda. To me, public school is just a form of imprisonment. They're particularly destructive to young men, who have a lot of physical energy.

I identify as transgender myself, but I do not require the entire world to alter itself to fit my particular self-image. I do believe in the power of hormones. I believe that men exist and women exist, and are biologically different. I think there is no cure for the culture's ills right now, except if men start standing up and demanding that they be respected as men again.

Peterson: Okay, okay, so I've got a question about that. We did a research project a year ago trying to figure out if there was such a thing as political correctness from a psychometric perspective, to find out if the loose aggregation of beliefs actually clump together statistically. And we actually found two factors, which I won't go into. Then we looked at things that predicted adherence to that politically correct creed. There were a couple that were surprising.

One was - being female was a predictor. The personality attributes associated with femininity - so that would be agreeableness and higher levels of negative emotion - were also both independent predictors. But so were symptoms of personality disorder, which I thought was really important.

Because part of what I see happening is that. . . I think that women whose relationship with men has been seriously pathologized cannot distinguish between male authority and competence and male tyrannical power. They fail to differentiate because all

they see is the oppressive male. And they may have had experiences that. . . Their experiences with men might have been rough enough so that differentiation never occurred. Because it has to occur. And you have to have a lot of experience with men - and good men, too - before that will occur.

But it seems to me that we're also increasingly dominated by a view of masculinity that's mostly characteristic of women who have terrible personality disorders, and who are unable to have healthy relationships with men. But here's the problem. This is something my wife has pointed out, too. She said, 'Well men are going to have to stand up for themselves.' But here's the problem.

I know how to stand up to a man who's unfairly trespassing against me. And the reason I know that is because the parameters for my resistance are quite well defined, which is: we talk, we argue, we push, and then it becomes physical. If we move beyond the boundaries of civil discourse, we know what the next step is.

That's forbidden in discourse with women. And so I don't think that men can control crazy women. I really don't believe it. I think they have to throw their hands up in. . . In what? It's not even disbelief. It's that the cultural. . . There's no step forward that you can take under those circumstances, because if the man is offensive enough and crazy enough, the reaction becomes physical right away. Or at least the threat is there.

And when men are talking to each other in any serious manner, that underlying threat of physicality is always there, especially if it's a real conversation. It keeps the thing civilized to some degree. If you're talking to a man who wouldn't fight with you under any circumstances whatsoever, then you're talking to someone [for] whom you have absolutely no respect.

But I can't see any way. . . For example there's a woman in Toronto who's been organizing this movement, let's say, against me and some other people who are going to do a free speech event. And she managed to organize quite effectively, and she's quite offensive, you might say. She compared us to Nazis, for example, publicly, using the Swastika, which wasn't something I was all that fond of.

But I'm defenseless against that kind of female insanity, because the techniques that I would use against a man who was employing those tactics are forbidden to me. So I don't know. . . It seems to me that it isn't men who have to stand up and say, 'Enough of this.' Even though that is what they should do, it seems to me that it's sane women who have to stand up against their crazy sisters and say, 'Look, enough of that. Enough man-hating. Enough pathology. Enough bringing disgrace on us as a gender.'

But the problem there - and then I'll stop my little tirade - is that most of the women I know who are sane are busy doing sane things. They have their career. They have their family. They're quite occupied, and they don't seem to have the time, or maybe even the interest, to go after their crazy, harpy sisters. And so I don't see any regulating force for that terrible femininity. And it seems to me to be invading the culture and undermining the masculine power of the culture in a way that's, I think,

fatal. I really do believe that.

Paglia: I, too, believe these are symptomatic of the decline of Western culture. And it will just go down flat. I don't think people realize that masculinity still exists in the world as a code among jihadists. And when you have passionate masculinity circling the borders like the Huns and the Vandals during the Roman Empire. . . That's what I see. I see this culture rotting from within and disemboweling itself, literally.

Now I have an overview of why we're having this problem, and it comes from the fact that I'm the product of an immigrant family. All four of my grandparents and my mother were born in Italy. So I remember from my earliest years in this factory town in upstate New York, where my relatives came to work in the shoe factory. I can remember, still, the life of the agrarian era - which was for most of human history - the agrarian era where there was the world of men and the world of women.

And the sexes had very little to do with each other. Each had power and status in its own realm. And they laughed at each other, in essence. The women had enormous power. In fact, the old women ruled, not the young beautiful women like today. But the older you were the more you had control over everyone, including the mating and marriage. There were no doctors, so the old women were like midwives and knew all the ins and outs and [had] inherited knowledge about pregnancy and all these other things.

I can remember this. And the joy that women had with each other all day long. Cooking with each other, being companions to each other, talking, conversing. My mother remembered, as a small child in Italy, when it was time to do the laundry they would take the laundry up the hill to the fountain and do it by hand. They would sing, they would picnic, and so on.

We get a glimpse of that in the Odyssey when Odysseus is thrown up naked on the shores of Phaeacia and he hears the sound of women, young women, laughing and singing. And it's Nausicaa, the princess, bringing the women to do the laundry. It's exactly the same thing. So there was. . . Each gender had its own hierarchy, its own values, its own way of talking. And the sexes rarely intersected.

I can remember in my childhood in a holiday - it could be a Christmas, it could be a Thanksgiving, whatever - women would be cooking all day long, everyone would sit down to eat, and then after that the women would retire en masse to the kitchen. And the men would go. . . I would look at them through the window and see all the men.

The men would be all outside, usually gathered around the car - at a time when cars didn't work as well as they do today - with the hood up. And the men would be standing with their hands on their hips like that. Everyone's staring at the engine. That's how I learned men were refreshing themselves by studying something technical and mechanical after being with the women during the dinner.

So all of these problems of today are the direct consequence of women's emancipation and freedom from housework thanks to capitalism, which made it possible for women to have jobs outside the home for the very first time in the nineteenth century. No longer to be dependent on husband or father or brother.

So this great thing that's happened to us, allowing us to be totally self-supporting, independent agents has produced all this animosity between men and women, because women feel unhappy. Women today - wherever I go, whether it's Italy or Brazil or England or America or Toronto - the upper-middle class professional women are unhappy, miserable.

And they don't know why they're unhappy. They want to blame it on men. The men must change. Men must become more like women. No. That is the wrong way to go. It's when men are men, and understand themselves as men, are secure as men - then you're going to be happier.

Peterson: There's nothing more dangerous than a weak man.

Paglia: Absolutely. Especially all these quislings spouting feminist rhetoric. When I hear that it makes me sick. But here's the point. Men and women have never worked side by side, ever. Maybe on the farms when you were like. . . Maybe one person is in the potato field and the other one is over here doing tomatoes, or whatever.

You had families working side by side, exhausted with each other. No time to have any clash of this. It was a collaborative effort on farms and so on. Never in all of human history have men and women been working side by side. And women are now. . . The pressure about Silicon Valley - they're all so sexist, they don't allow women in, and so on. Men are being men in Silicon Valley.

Peterson: Especially the engineers.

Paglia: And the women are demanding that. . . 'Oh, this is terrible, you're being sexist.' Maybe the sexes have their own particular form of rhetoric, their own particular form of identity. Maybe we need to reexamine this business about. . . Maybe we have to perhaps accept some degree of tension and conflict between the sexes in a work environment.

I don't mean harassment. I'm talking about women feeling disrespected. Somehow their opinions, when they express them, are not taken seriously. Even Hillary Clinton is complaining. When a woman writes something online she's attacked immediately. Everyone is attacked online. What are you talking about? The world is tough. The world is competitive. Identity is honed by conflict. The idea that there should be no conflict, that we have to be in this bath of approbation. . . It's infantile.

Peterson: That's right. It's absolutely infantile. Okay, so, a couple of things there. Well the first thing is that the agreeableness trait that divides men and women

most. . . There's three things that divide women and men most particularly from the psychometric perspective.

One is that women are more agreeable than men, and so that seems to be the primary maternal dimension as far as I can tell. It's associated with a desire to avoid conflict. But it's associated with interpersonal closeness, compassion, politeness. Women are reliably higher than men, especially in the Scandinavian countries and in the countries where egalitarianism has progressed the farthest.

So that's where the difference is maximized, which is one of the things James Damore pointed out quite correctly in his infamous Google Memo. Women are higher in negative emotion. So that's anxiety and emotional pain. That difference is approximately the same size. And again that maximizes in egalitarian societies, which is extremely interesting. And then the biggest difference is the difference in interest between people and things. And so women are more interested in people, and men are more interested in things, which goes along quite nicely with your car anecdote.

But the thing about men interacting with men again is that it isn't that they respect each other's viewpoints. That's not exactly right. What happens with a man. . . I know a lot of men that I would regard as remarkably tough people for one reason or another. And everything you do with them is a form of combat. Like if you want your viewpoint taken seriously, often you have to yell them down. They're not going to stop talking unless you start talking over them.

It's not like men are automatically giving respect to other men, because that just doesn't happen. It's that the combat is there, and it's expected. And one of the problems. . . And so, this is one of the reasons I think men are bailing out of so much of academia and maybe the academic world in general. And maybe the world in general. Men actually don't have any idea how to compete with women.

Because the problem is that if you unleash yourself completely, then you're an absolute bully. And there's no doubt about that, because if men unleash themselves on other men, that can be pretty goddamn brutal, especially for the men that really tough. And so that just doesn't happen with women ever. So you can't unleash yourself completely. If you win, you're a bully. If you lose, well you're just bloody pathetic. So how the hell are you supposed to play a game like that?

I've worked with lots of women in law firms in Canada, for example. And high achieving women, like really remarkable people I would say. And they're often nonplussed, I would say, by the attitude of the men in the law firm, because they would like to see everyone pulling together because they're all part of the same team. Whereas the men are like at each other's throats in a cooperative way because they want the law firm to succeed, but they want to be the person who is at the top of the success hierarchy.

And that doesn't jive well with the more cooperative ethos that's part and parcel of agreeableness. So we don't really have any idea how to integrate male and female dominance hierarchies.

Paglia: Exactly. Exactly. That's exactly right. This is why I love this show *Real Housewives*, which is [inaudible]. And just last night I was watching an episode where the women were at each other at a party and recounting. 'But I said this to you, but you said this to me.' And the men got together there and said 'Well this is the way they communicate with each other. And we men just will have a fist fight, and ten minutes later we're going to have a beer at the bar next to each other.' I have observed that my entire life.

Peterson: My daughter used to be really irritated about that because she, like most people, was the target of feminine conspiratorial bullying at one. . . She's no pushover, my daughter. So it wasn't like this was a continual thing or that she didn't know what to do about it.

But she had observed these girls conspiring against her and blackening her name on Facebook, which is part and parcel of the typical female bullying routine, which is often reputation demolition. There's a good literature on that. And then she'd watch what would happen if my son would have a dispute with his friends. And maybe they were drinking, and there was a dispute. They'd have a fight, and the next day they were friends again.

That's another thing that's strange is that men have a way of bringing a conflict to a head and resolving it. And it isn't obvious to me that women have that same, perhaps you might call it, luxury. But it's also the case that men don't know what to do when they get into a conflict with a woman. Because what the hell are you supposed to do? Mostly what you're supposed to do is avoid it.

Paglia: Well I've seen - I don't know if this crosses into other countries - that there's a certain kind of taunting and teasing that men, that boys do with each other that toughens them, where they don't take things seriously. But a girl's feelings become extremely hurt if she hears something that's very tough, sarcastic against her.

So I do feel that there are profound differences between the sexes in terms of emotions, in terms of communication patterns. My father used to say that he could never follow women's conversations. He said women don't even finish sentences, that women understand immediately what the other woman is saying. And women tend to be more interested in - or have been traditionally more interested in - soap operas. It's not just that the women were home without jobs. It's that honestly, I believe that soap opera does reflect, does mirror, the way women talk to each other.

These communication patterns have been built up through women - the world of women, which. . . It made sense that there was a division of labor. It wasn't sexism against women that there was a division of labor. The men went off to hunt and did the dangerous things. The women stayed around the hearth because you had pregnant women, nursing women, older women, that were cooking and so on.

So I feel that these communication patterns that we're talking about have been built up over the centuries. Men had to toughen each other to go out. The hunting parties of Native Americans. . . They could be gone for two weeks when the temperature was below zero. Many of them died. The idea that somehow. . . 'Oh, any kind of separation of the sexes, or different spheres of the sexes, is inherently sexist'. . . That is wrong.

Peterson: And inherently driven by a power dynamic.

Paglia: The answer to all of this, everything that we're talking about, is education into early history. Until people understand the Stone Age, the nomadic period, the agrarian era, and how culture, how civilization built up. . .

In Mesopotamia - the great irrigation projects. Or in Egypt where you had. . . Centralized government authority became necessary to master these. . . You had a situation, an environmentally difficult situation like the deserts Mesopotamia, or the peculiar character of Egyptian geography where you can only have a little tiny fertile line along the edges of the Nile. Otherwise, desert landscape. So [understanding] civilization and authority as not necessarily about power grabbing but about organization to achieve something for the good of the people as a whole.

Peterson: That's exactly the great symbolism of the Great Father.

Paglia: By reducing all hierarchy to power, and selfish power, is utterly naive. It's ignorant. I say education has to be totally reconstituted, including public education, to begin in the most distant past so our young people today, who know nothing about how the world was created that they inhabit, can understand what a marvelous technological paradise they live in.

And it's the product of capitalism, it's the product of individual innovation. Most of it's the product of a Western tradition that everyone wants to trash now. If you begin in the past and show. . . And also talk about war, because war is the one thing that wakes people up, as we see.

Peterson: And as we may see.

Paglia: Yes, war is the reality principle. My father and five of my uncles went to World War II. My father was part of the force that landed in Japan. He was a paratrooper at the time of the Japanese surrender. And a couple of uncles got shot up and so on.

When you have the reality of war, when people see the reality, the horrors of war - Berlin burned to a crisp and so on. Starvation and all. . . Then you understand this marvelous mechanism that brings water to the kitchen. And you flip on a light and the electricity turns on.

Peterson: I know, for me, and I suppose it's because I have somewhat of a

depressive temperament. . . I mean one thing that staggers me on a consistent basis is the fact that anything ever works. Because it's so unlikely, you know, to be in a situation where our electronic communications work, where our electric grid works. And it works all the time, it works one hundred percent of the time. And the reason for that is there are mostly men out there who are breaking themselves into pieces, repairing this thing which just falls apart all the time.

Paglia: Absolutely. I said this in the Munk Debate in Toronto several years ago. All these elitists and professors sneering at men. It's men who are maintaining everything around us. This invisible army which feminists don't notice. Nothing would work if it weren't for the men.

Peterson: A professor is someone who's standing on a hill surrounded by a wall, which is surrounded by another wall, which is surrounded by another wall - it's walls all the way down - who stands up there and says I'm brave and independent. It's like, you've got this protected area that's so unlikely - it's so absolutely unlikely - and the fact that people aren't on their knees in gratitude all the time for the fact that we have central heating and air conditioning and pure water and reliable food. . . It's absolutely unbelievable.

Paglia: Yes, I mean people used to die. . . The water supply was contaminated with cholera for heaven's sake. People don't understand. To have clean water, fresh milk, fresh orange juice. All of these things. These are marvels.

Peterson: And all of the time.

Paglia: All of the time. Western culture is heading - because we are so dependent on this invisible infrastructure - we're heading for an absolute catastrophe when jihadists figure out how to paralyze the power grid. The entire culture will be chaotic. You'll have mobs in the street within three days when suddenly the food supply is interrupted and there's no way to communicate. That is the way Western culture is going to collapse. And it won't take much.

Peterson: Single points of failure.

Paglia: Because we are so interconnected, and now we're so dependent on communications and computers. . . I used to predict for years it'll be an asteroid hitting the earth, and then we'll have another ice age.

Peterson: Do you know how the solar flares work? This happens about once every century. So back about 1880 - I don't remember the exact year - there was a significant enough solar flare. . . So that produces an electromagnetic pulse like a hydrogen bomb because the sun *is* a hydrogen bomb. An electromagnetic pulse will emerge from the sun and wave across the earth, and it produces huge spikes in electrical current along anything that's electronic, and it will burn them out.

It lit telegraph operators on fire in the 1800s. One of those things took out the Quebec power grid in 1985 and knocked out the whole Northeast Corridor. So they figure those things are about one in a century event.

My brother-in-law, who's a very smart guy. . . He designed the chip in the iPhone. We were talking about political issues the last time I went and saw him in San Francisco, and his notion was that all that the government should be doing right now is stress-testing our infrastructure the same way they stress-test the banks. Because we're so full of these single points of failure.

And I think you're absolutely right. Luckily we've been, what would you call, invaded by stupid terrorists instead of smart terrorists, because a smart terrorist could do an unbelievable amount of damage in a very short period of time. And it's just God's good graces that that hasn't happened yet.

Paglia: What will happen is that it's the men. . . The men will reconstruct civilization while the women cower in the houses and have the men go out and do all the dirty work. That's what's going to happen again. Only men will bring civilization back again.

Peterson: Okay, so now a couple of things. So the universities. . . I mean I've proposed - although it's something that's probably beyond my power - that what should happen is that the universities, the real content of the universities, should be stolen back from the universities, because they're not making use of their intellectual property. And that something should be started online that would constitute a genuine university. The problem is the accreditation issue, but I don't think that's an unsolvable problem. But, do you see. . . All these people who have these postmodern neo-Marxist agendas are completely embedded inside the universities.

Paglia: Absolutely. And the point is over the last 25 years I have received constant mail from people dropping out of the graduate schools or giving up altogether on any idea of being a college professor. So what's happened is that the most talented and independent thinking people have avoided the schools. So now who we have are the compliant, the servile. The people who are currently in the universities and hiring their successors are mal-educated themselves.

One of the first letters I received in the early 1990s - I'll never forget it - was from a woman who was now painting houses in Missouri and said she had been part of the comparative literature graduate program at Berkeley, and that she finally had to drop out because she said every time she would express enthusiasm for what they were reading the people looked at her as if she had created offense. In other words, enthusiasm for art, the very things you need as a teacher in the classroom, were being trained out of the grad students.

Peterson: If you respect art and literature, that means that you implicitly accept a hierarchy of quality, and that of course contradicts the fundamental tenants of the

postmodern doctrine, which is that there are no hierarchies of quality. And you talked a little bit earlier about the idea that. . . You referred again to the idea that everything is associated with power, and that's the thing that I can't help but associate with a kind of personality pathology.

You know, from a psychometric perspective, the best predictors of long-term success in our society are intelligence - IQ, which you can measure very accurately - and trait conscientiousness, which actually is a real testament to the culture. Because what you'd hope is that the smart people who work hard are the people who advance. It isn't like they deserve it, exactly. That isn't what I mean.

It's that if the culture is harnessing the productive power of individuals properly, then it should differentially reward people who are smart and conscientious, because they're going to do a bunch really interesting work for the rest of us. And that's [a] very well-established finding. It's as good as any finding in the social sciences. But despite that, and despite the fact that everything works - which is a goddamn miracle of sorts - there is this consistent story that we live in a patriarchy, that it's only oppressive, that it's done nothing but oppress women since the beginning of time - which is also something that just boggles my mind.

Paglia: Men have sacrificed for women and children, including their lives, for thousands of years. Yes, there's been brutality, but the brutality is in the minority. This sick portrayal of human history is nothing but male oppression and female victimage. This is a way to permanently ensure the infantilization of women.

Peterson: You can even make the case from a purely logical perspective. So here's an interesting fact. Most of the people who abuse their children were abused as children. But most of the people who were abused as children don't abuse their children. So if you look at the population of abusers, they were all abused. So you can say abuse causes abuse. But that's not a good idea, because you have a specific sample there. It's not a random sample. What happens is abuse dampens out over the centuries. It doesn't propagate itself.

And that's obvious, because if there was. . . If the hypothesis of essential male tyranny was true, it would spread exponentially through the population in like three generations and there wouldn't be an exception at all. And so what happens is even when there is a tilt towards tyranny, let's say, in the family or even in the society, that regresses back to something that's far more benign very, very rapidly.

Paglia: To me, one of the biggest unexamined issues is the transition from the great extended family of old into the nuclear family. And I do feel that Freud is the best analyst of the particular kind of claustrophobic cell of the modern nuclear family. It could be that human beings were never intended to be trapped in a house with their parents.

The extended family - your aunts and grandparents and cousins - all of whom helped form your identity. One's identity was a member of a community rather than in this like

hothouse environment. I think a lot of current issues, including this sudden spate of transgender claims and so on. . . A lot of these things are coming from this unstable cell. It's really a prison cell of a nuclear family. Two parents perhaps cannot give all the knowledge of life to the young. I think there are all kinds of sexual issues that are generated by it.

But psychology today is now simply a practical matter. People come in, the psychologist - in the United States - deals with your present problem. 'Let's not go into the distant past. Let's just deal with our present problem, which. . . Obviously we have forms of communication. We need to like fix this, and then you'll be fine.'

As a consequence, there is a complete absence of any kind of analysis of your experiences as a child with your parents, with your siblings, and so on - how that might relate to your current sexual identity issues, whether it's transgender or whether it's homosexuality. You cannot ask about any genesis of homosexuality today, because that is automatically defined as 'homophobic.'

Well excuse me. As an openly gay person myself. . . Every gay person I know, there's some story there, it seems to me, in childhood. Not only that, there's a strange similarity of the storylines of all of my friends who are gay. There's a same pattern that had to do with blurred borderlines between a son and his mother and so on.

I'm not blaming the mother. I'm not blaming the mother at all. What I see is a dynamic going on in the bourgeois house, in the nuclear family, where you had sometimes a distant father - father who was present but not really engaged - and a mother who made her son her companion in some way. Often the mother has great imagination and flair, and they had a shared thing. The idea that homosexuality has nothing whatever to do with your family life is nonsense.

Peterson: Well that's another thing. I got in a lot of trouble in Canada for my opposition to Bill C-16, which was a bill that had to do with transgender rights, and I didn't really give a damn about the transgender rights issue. That had nothing to do with it. What bothered me was that there was an issue of compelled speech, because you were required by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to use the pronouns of the person's choice.

Paglia: And that is absolutely Orwellian. That is absolutely intolerable. I said years ago that my book, *Sexual Personae*, which was like a 700 page book. . . I said that is the biggest sex change in history because I, with my transgender issues, look to the magnificent construction of English. It was the English language that I seized on to gain my identity and my power as a person. And therefore, any intrusion into English - someone trying to tell me how to use English, this great gift - to me is absolutely obscene and evil. . . For any government to try to dictate to us how we're going to use this magnificent instrument of English.

Peterson: Yes, absolutely. And that was for me the breaking point, because I believe.

. . . I think that that's associated with the idea of the logos in the West. Because that's a deep mythological idea that the logos is the thing that brings order out of chaos through communicative speech, and that that's tightly aligned with your soul. And I don't care if you're an atheist or a believer. It doesn't matter. It's still the right language. And no one has any right whatsoever under any circumstances to trespass against that. But that's okay because that's law in Canada now.

So now back to your. . . Let's see, you were making a point about. . . Oh yes. It's interesting to look at these things from multiple perspectives, which is another thing ideologues don't do, because for them everything is one cause. That's how you can tell when you're dealing with someone who's ideologically possessed. They make everything attributable to a single cause like 'power.'

So one of the things that's happened with the nuclear family that's quite interesting, too, is that parents are older, and they have fewer children. So you can imagine that that hothouse environment in some sense has been exaggerated for a bunch of reasons.

One is, well, your child is a lot more valuable to you if you're older and you only have one or two. Because you're not going to get another chance - first of all, you might have had some trouble having the child to begin with, and you're not going to get another chance. So all your eggs are in one basket, so to speak.

And then of course children don't have the number of siblings they used to have. And one of the things that's really useful about having siblings is that they keep you in your place. They're primary socialization agents. And I mean that can be brutal, and that's reflected, say, in the story of Cain and Abel - you know, that that internal household dynamic with siblings can really become murderous. And that has to be kept under control.

But I think the hothouse flower person who's incapable of tolerating any jibes or any testing, any dominance hierarchy testing of the sort that you said that men do. . . Part of that's the consequence of being raised by older parents, who have excess resources, who have no siblings. Because the child is then of course special. And that specialness. . . Well, there seems to be an inverse relationship between that specialness that's protected and the person's robustness and resilience. And that's pandered to by the universities, which insist upon setting up a situation where no one is ever offended by anything any of the time.

Paglia: That's a huge point you just made, because it's the upper-middle class, the professional class, who postpones having the children. Because they go to law school, they go to medical school, and they have the children after they're settled in a job. They're the ones who have injected this hypersensitive, bourgeois code into the universities.

My parents were twenty when they married and twenty-one when they had me. My father went to college on the GI Bill, getting out of World War II. So when I was born

my father was still in college and was sweeping floors and so on. I am the product of young parents. And nature wants, actually, young parents, because pregnancy is quicker, it's safer. And my parents had the energy, this youthful energy, can-do spirit that came out of World War II. I'm a product of that.

Then, my only other sibling was born fourteen years later. My father at this point was a college professor. So she had completely different parents than I did. So she has very excellent manners and so on. She's completely different. I have all this energy. My parents were just out of their teens.

So now today we have this situation - and it's considered heresy to raise this issue - that young women are told, 'There's one future for you; you are a future leader; you must move forward.' Four years of college and perhaps some professional classes. It may be that young women's bodies are signaling that they want to be mothers. Maybe there are signals coming from the body of maybe not wanting this system of education that was devised for men, being funneled along, channeled along in this mechanism.

So young women feel unhappy, they don't know why. They have no sense of identity. If they want to marry and drop out of college and have a baby, they will be treated as traitors to their class. 'What? You are a future leader. Have a baby? Only working-class women would do that.'

I find working-class women, in general, far more rounded as personalities. They express themselves forcefully, they have body language that takes up space. A man says something to them on the street, they are right back in their face. It's the bourgeois girls who are taught that they're special, who have to postpone actual life for all these years.

These are the girls who are misjudged in the fraternity party setting. These are the girls who run for parental protection and hand-holding, on the committee investigating what went wrong on their date. So yes, I think that what you have located. . . That's very interesting, the idea that these young girls who are so sensitive in college, so unable to handle their sex life, are the product of older parents because they went through the professional career track. Yes, and they have not had the experience of the competitiveness and teasing of other siblings.

Peterson: Also, the thing about young parents is they don't care as much as older parents, and that actually turns out to be better. Because what you really want for your children is minimum necessary intervention. And the developmental literature is actually quite clear on this.

So if you're at home with your child, the best role that you can play is to be there, but not to be interacting with the child all the time. The child should be off doing whatever it is that children do, which, generally, is playing with other children without it being mediated by screens and technology. Because that's how they formulate their identity. And that's how they learn to play joint games with other people. And the parent is supposed to be there as a recourse for the child when they go out a little bit farther

than they can tolerate, and have to come back and get some security.

But that's especially not what happens to single children, because they're basically raised as miniature adults. And I wonder, too, like how much of the antipathy towards. . . These are dark musings. And I would say, how much of the antipathy towards men that's being generated by, say, college-age women is deep repugnance for the role that they've been designed, and a disappointment with the men. . .

You know, you think of those. . . I can't remember the culture. The basic marital routine was to ride into the village and grab the bride and run away with her on a horse. It's like the motorcycle gang member who rips the too-naive girl out of the bosom of her family.

Paglia: Yeah, there used to be bride stealing. It was quite widespread.

Peterson: Right, so I kind of wonder if part of the reason that modern university women aren't so angry is because that fundamental feminine role is actually being denied to them. And they're objecting to that at a really, really fundamental level. Like a level of primitive outrage.

Paglia: Well, what's happened is the chaos that my generation of the 1960s bequeathed through the sexual revolution. When I arrived in college in 1964 the colleges were still acting in *loco parentis*, in place of a parent, so my dormitory, all women's dormitory, we women had to sign in at eleven o'clock at night. The men could run free the entire night.

So it was my generation of women that rose up and said, 'Give us the same freedom as men have,' and the colleges replied, 'No. The world is dangerous. You could be raped. We have to protect you against rape.' And what we said was, 'Give us the freedom to risk rape.'

What today's women don't understand: it's the freedom that you want. It's the same freedom that gay men have when they go and they pick up a stranger some place. They know it's dangerous, they know they could end up beaten up or killed, but they find it hot. If you want freedom, if you want equality, then you have to start behaving like a man.

So what we did is we gave freedom to these young women for several generations, but my generation had been raised in a far more resilient and robust culture. We had the strength to know what we wanted and to fight for what we wanted. These young women have been raised in this terribly protected way. So I think in some strange fashion that all these demands for intrusion from these Stalinist committees, investigating dates and so on - it's a way to reinstitute the rules that my generation threw out the window.

So I think these young women are desperate. Not only that, but I have spoken very strongly in a piece I wrote for *Time Magazine*. It was in my recent book that raising the drinking age in this country from 18 to 21 has had a direct result in these disasters of binge drinking fraternity parties. Let college students, the way we could, go out as

freshmen, have a beer, sit in a protected adult environment, learn how to discourse with the opposite sex in a safe environment.

And now today, because of this stupid rule that young people can't even buy a drink in a bar until they're 21, we have these fraternity parties that are like it's the caveman era. Well of course in this modern age this advantages men. Men want to hook up. Men want to have sex. Women don't understand what men want. Women put out because they're hoping the man will continue to be interested in them. The man just wants experience.

The hormones drive toward. . . To me, I theorize that the sex drive in men is intertwined with hunt and pursuit. This is what women don't understand. And if women understood what I understand from my transgender perspective. . . These women on the streets. . . You know, I am, obviously, a Madonna admirer, and I support pornography and prostitution, so I don't want what I'm about to say to seem conservative because it isn't.

What I'm saying is that women on the streets. . . Young women who are jogging with no bra on, short shorts, and have earbuds in their ears, just jogging along. These women do not understand the nature of the human mind. They do not understand the nature of psychosis.

And this intertwining that I'm talking about of the hunt and pursuit thing. They're triggering a hunt thing. . . Just what you have talked about in terms of the zebra herd. They are triggering the hunt impulse in psychotic men. There goes a very appetizing and totally oblivious animal, bouncing along here.

And we're in a period now where psychosis is not understood at all. Young women have had no exposure to movies like Psycho. You know, the kind of rapists, serial murderer thing and so on. The kind of strange dynamic which has to do with assault on the 'mother imago' in the mind of a psychotic. I think there's an incredible naïveté.

These young women are emerging and going to college in this like incredible Dionysian environment of orgiastic sexual experience in fraternity houses. They're completely unprepared for it. And so you're getting all this outrage. So feminist rhetoric has gotten more and more extreme in its portrayal of men as evil. But in fact what we have is a chaos. It's a chaos in the sexual realm. The girls have not been told anything real in terms of biological substratum to sexual activity.

Peterson: No, there's full of lies about what constitutes consent, too. And it's become something that's essentially portrayed linguistically as a sequence of progressive contracts, which is. . . You know, I've thought for a while that we're living in the delusional fantasy of a naive thirteen year old girl. That basically sums up our culture. And I look at all these sexual rules that permeate the academia, and I think two things.

The first thing I think is, well. . . I know because I was an alcohol researcher for a long time, and you know that 50% of violent crimes are directly contributed to alcohol. So if you're murdered, there's about a 50% chance that you're drunk and about a 50% chance that the person who kills you is drunk. And alcohol is the only drug that we know

that actually amplifies aggression. It does that in laboratory situations. Plus it's a great disinhibitor.

So what alcohol does is. . . It doesn't make you oblivious to the future consequences of your actions, because if you ask someone who's drunk about the consequences of something stupid, they can tell you what the consequences are. But it makes you not care. And it does that because it's technically an anxiolytic like barbiturates or like benzodiazepines.

And it also has an activating property for many people who drink, so it's a stimulant and an anxiolytic at the same time. And a very, very potent. . . It's very potent for both of them. You know, we put young people together and douse them in alcohol at the binge drinking level - which also interferes with memory consolidation, which of course makes things much more complex - and then we're surprised when there are sexual misadventures.

And then it's also attributed almost purely to the predatory element that's part and parcel of masculinity, but a tremendous amount of that is also naivety and stupidity. Because we expect. . . 18 year old guys, especially the ones that aren't, that haven't been successful with girls, which is like 85% of them because the successful men are a very small percentage of men.

The 85% who haven't been successful with men or with women - they don't know what the hell they're doing at all. And part of the reason they're getting drunk is to garner up enough courage to actually make an advance. Because another thing I think women don't understand, especially with regards to young men, is just exactly how petrifying an attractive woman who's of, say, somewhat higher status actually is to a young guy. There's lots of guys that write me constantly, and people that I've worked with, that are so terrified of women they can't even talk to them. It's very, very common.

Paglia: I take a very firm position, which is that I want college administrations to stay totally out of the social lives of the students. If a crime is committed, it should be reported to the police. I've been writing that for twenty-five years now. But it's not the business of any college administration to take any notice of what the students say to each other - say to each other - as well as do with each other. I want it totally stopped. It is fascism of the worst kind.

Peterson: I agree. And I think it's fascism of the worst kind because it's a new kind of fascism. It's partly generated by legislation, like the Title 9 memo that was written in 2011. I recently got a copy of that goddamn thing. That was one polluting bit of legislation. That memo basically told universities that unless they set up a parallel court system, they were going to be denied federal funding. It is absolutely unbelievable.

Paglia: Incredible. And the leftists are supporting this? This shows there is no authentic campus leftism. I'm sorry, it's a fraud. The faculty should be fighting the

administration on this. Federal regulation of how we're supposed to behave on campus?

Peterson: Well how can you be so naive and foolish to think that taking an organization like the university, which already has plenty to do, and forcing it to become a pseudo legal system that parallels the legal system could possibly be anything but utterly catastrophic.

It would mean you have to know absolutely nothing about the legal system and about the tremendous period of evolution that produced what's actually a stellar system and an adversarial system that protects the rights of the accused and of the victim. And to replace that with an ad-hoc bureaucracy that has pretty much the same degree of power as the court system with absolutely none of the training and none of the guarantees.

Paglia: Kangaroo courts. That piece that I wrote about date rape - it was in January, 1991 Newsday - was the most controversial thing I ever wrote in my entire career. I attacked the entire thing, and demanded that colleges stand back and get out of the social lives of the students. The reaction. People tried to call. . . They called the president of my university, tried to get me fired. You can't believe the hysteria.

Peterson: I can believe it.

Paglia: Yeah, you can believe it. Anything that says to women that they should be responsible for their own choices is regarded as reactionary? Are they kidding me? This is such a betrayal of authentic feminism in my view.

Peterson: Well it's the ultimate betrayal of authentic feminism because it's an invitation of all the things that you might be paranoid about with regards to the patriarchy back into your life. It's an insistence that the most intrusive part of the tyrannical king come and take control of the most intimate details of your life.

Paglia: Incredible. Absolutely incredible.

Peterson: And the assumption is that that's going to make your life better rather than worse.

Paglia: And not to mention this idea of the stages of verbal consent, as if your impulses based in the body have anything to do with words. That's the whole point of sex is to abandon that part of the brain that's so trammled with words.

Peterson: It's actually a marker of lack of social ability to have to do that. Because if you're sophisticated. . . It's not like if you're dancing with someone, it's not like you call out the moves. If you have to do that, well then you're worse than a neophyte. You're an awkward neophyte, and anyone with any sense should get the hell away from you.

So if you're reduced to the point where you have to verbally negotiate every element of intimate interaction. . .

Paglia: What a downer.

Peterson: Yes, but what an unbelievably naive and pathological view of the manner in which human beings interact. There's no sophistication in that.

Paglia: What I'm worried about also, in this age of social media. . . I've noticed that as a teacher in the classroom that the young people are so used to communicating now by cellphone, by iPhone, that they're losing body language and facial expressions, which I think is going to compound the problem with these dating encounters.

Because the ability to read the human face and to read little tiny inflections of emotion. . . I think my generation got that from looking at great foreign films with their long takes. So you'd have Jeanne Moreau and Catherine Deneuve in like potential romantic encounters, and you could see the tiniest little inflections that signal communication or sexual readiness or irony or skepticism or distance or whatever.

The inability to read other people's intentions. . . I think this is going to be a disaster. I just notice how year by year the students are becoming much more flat affect. And they themselves complain that they'll sit in the same room with someone and be texting to each other.

Peterson: Yeah, well there's a piece of evidence, too, that supports that to some degree. Women with brothers are less likely to get raped. And the reason for that is that they've learned that nonverbal language deeply.

Paglia: Not only that but I have noticed in my career that women who have many brothers are very good as administrators and as business people, because they don't take men seriously. They saw their brothers. They think their brothers are jokes. But they know how to control men while they still like men. They admire men. This is something I have seen repeatedly.

Peterson: So that would be also reflective of the problem of fewer and fewer siblings.

Paglia: Yes, that's right. I've noticed this in publishing. The women who have the job of publicist and rise to the top as manager of publicity - their ability to take charge of men and their humor with men. They have great relationships with men, because they don't have a sense of resentment and worry and anxiety. They don't see men as aggressors.

And I think that's another thing, too. As feminism moved into its present system of ideology it has tended to denigrate motherhood as a lesser order of human experience, and to enshrine of course abortion. Now I am a hundred percent for abortion rights. I belonged to Planned Parenthood for years until I finally rejected it as a branch of the Democratic Party, my own party.

But as motherhood became excluded, as feminism became obsessed with the professional woman, I feel that the lessons that mothers learn have been lost to feminism. The mothers who bear boy children understand the fragility of men, the fragility of boys. They understand it. They don't see boys and men as a menace. They understand the greater strength of women.

So there's this tenderness and connectedness between the mother and the boy child when motherhood is part of the experience of women who are discussing gender. So what we have today is that this gender ideology has risen up on campuses where all. . . None of the girls, none of the students have married. None of them have had children. And you have women, some of whom have had children. . . But a lot of them are like lesbians or like professional women and so on.

So this whole tenderness and forgivingness and encouragement that women do to boys. . . This hypersensitivity of boys is not understood. Instead, boys are seen as somehow more privileged. And somehow their energy level is interpreted as aggression, potential violence, and so on. We would do better if would have. . . I have proposed that colleges should allow. . . The moment a woman has entered, she has entered that college for life and that she should be free to leave to have babies when her body wants that baby, when it's healthy to have them. And then return, have the occasional course, and build up credits. And fathers might be able to do it as well.

To get married women and women with children into the classroom. The moment that happens, as happened after World War II where you had a lot of married guys in the classroom. . . Not that many women. The experience of a married person with a family talking about gender. . . Most of the gender stuff would be laughed out of the room if you had a real mother in there who had experienced childbirth and was raising boys. So I think that's also something that has led to this incredible artificiality and hysteria of feminist rhetoric.

Peterson: There's another strange element to that, which is that on the one hand the radical feminist types, the neo-Marxists, postmodernists, are very much opposed to the patriarchy, let's say, and that's that uni-dimensional, ideological representation of our culture.

Paglia: That has never existed. Perhaps the word could be applied to Republican Rome and that's it.

Peterson: Maybe it could be applied usefully to certain kinds of tyranny, but not to a society that's actually functional.

Paglia: Victoria England, arguably. But other than that, to use the word 'patriarchy' in a slapdash way, so amateurish. It just shows people know nothing about history whatever, have done no reading.

Peterson: So what confuses me about that is that despite the fact that the patriarchy is viewed as this essentially evil entity, and that that's associated with the masculine energy that built this oppressive structure, the antithesis of that, which would actually be femininity as far as I can tell, which is tightly associated with care and with child-rearing, is also denigrated.

So it's like the only proper role for women to adopt is a patriarchal role, despite the fact that the patriarchy is something that's entirely corrupt. So the hypothesis seems to be that the patriarchy would be just fine if women ran it. So no changes. It would just be a transformation of leadership, and somehow that would rectify the fundamental problem, even though it's hypothetically supposed to be structural.

Okay, so I'm going to close with something. So, you know, there are elements in my character that are optimistic. I've looked, for example. . . I've worked for a UN Committee on the relationship between economic development and sustainability. And I found out a variety of things that were very optimistic like the fact that the UN set out to half poverty between 2000 and 2015 worldwide, and actually hit that by about 2010. So we're in the period of the fastest transformation of the bottom strata of the world's population into something approximating middle class that's ever occurred.

And there's all these great technological innovations on the horizon. And it looks to me like things could go extraordinarily well if we were careful. But I'm not optimistic, and maybe that's me. I'm pessimistic because I also see that there's five or six things happening, all of which appear at the level of catastrophe, that are all happening at the same time.

So one of the things that I'd like to ask you is: What do you see happening in the next ten years in the universities or in culture at large? I mean, you just put forward a proposal for the universities for the treatment of women, which I think is a very interesting one because women do have a very different timeframe than men.

But what the hell is the proper way forward? I've been encouraging young men to tell the truth and to take responsibility, and there's a huge market for that message. But I'm not convinced, by any stretch of the imagination, that it's enough. When you look forward and you try to be optimistic, what the hell do you see?

Paglia: Well, in the largest scale I'm concerned about the future of Western culture because, as a student of history, it looks too much to me like ancient Rome, which became over-expanded. It was at the mercy of bureaucratic creep. And Roman identity eventually got blurred in its incorporation of so many different cultures, which at first seemed like a healthy kind of multiculturalism. But eventually it over-expanded and simply collapsed of its own weight.

So I am concerned about whether Western culture is in rapid decline. I think it would be very easy - because we are so interconnected and so over-complex - very easy to bring it to ruin. It would only take one major natural disaster to do that.

But the universities themselves. . . I mean, I think people are all of a sudden in the United States much more attentive to issues of political correctness because of the riots at Berkeley, which was the capital of free speech. The Free Speech Movement happened in the spring before I entered college in 1964.

One of the great principles and inspirational stories of my entire life, Mario Savio's assertion of the supremacy of free thought and free speech. I think perhaps we might just have turned a corner, but it's going to take a very, very long time for the university to be reformed. I feel that the cafeteria menu of the university curriculum has to be abandoned. We must return to historical courses that begin in the earliest period, in the Stone Age and antiquity in order to give perspective to our present. . . An analysis to our present culture.

I want fifty to seventy-five percent of college administrators fired and the money be transferred over to faculty and to libraries and to instruction. I think that obviously the way people are being trained right now, including at the public school level. . . I think the public school level has gone to hell.

When my mother came to the United States at the age of six, the old public school system was still very strict. And therefore she had some excellent education and got all A's in her. . . Even though she started out not speaking English, spoke without an accent. So today this kind of feel-good public school education, which is a form of ideology and indoctrination right now. It's all about 'no bullying' and not about anything substantive.

Peterson: And not even seriously about 'no bullying'.

Paglia: Yes. So I can tell in my own students. I mean, I've been teaching for 46 years. So I can tell the slow degradation of public school education to the point now that the students have absolutely no sense of world geography, of world history. They know absolutely nothing. . . They don't know anything about wars. And the reality, the barbaric reality of most of human history. . . What a fantastic culture we live in.

Now identity politics itself has just got to stop. I mean, it was important once. I was a rebel against the WASP hegemony, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony, in American culture. It was suffocating. I was raised in the 1950s when WASPs controlled corporations and education and politics and so on.

So identity politics was necessary once. We asserted gay rights with the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969. We asserted women's rights with the rebirth of second wave feminism in the late 1960s. But this endless preoccupation with a fragmented identity. . . We must return to the authentic 1960s vision, which is about identity coming from consciousness, which transcends gender. Which transcends all these divisions of race and ethnicity. Consciousness itself. There's no sense of that any longer. And that's what the 1960s sought.

Peterson: Well I see that as a complete abandonment of personal responsibility because that consciousness, I think, symbolically - and I got a lot of this from Jung and also from Erich Neumann - I mean, that's the great logos of the West. That's the transcendent principle, which is respect for the primacy of individual consciousness.

And what goes along with that primarily isn't individual rights, although that's built into it. I mean, that's the reason we have individual rights is for respect for that. But the responsibility that comes along with being an individual, instead of a member of some group, especially a victimized group, which is. . .

I wrote an article with one of my students who had toured the mass grave sites in the former Yugoslavia and had been exposed to that sort of thing. And one of the things that our research indicated was that the best predictor of genocide is victimization on the part of the group that produces the genocide - a sense of, an accelerated sense of, victimization, and then it's 'well, we get them before they get us.'

And everyone is being taught now that they're a victim. And no one seems to have any sense that that's part of the essential tragedy of being - that life is suffering, and that the world rests on a foundation of suffering. It's nothing to take personally and something to take responsibility for instead of blaming and resentment and all of the things that have polluted our universities and our culture.

Paglia: There also was the abandonment of the Canon. People asserted that the Canon was the product of bias and again of a provincial elitism and so on. But in point of fact, as a student of history of the arts, I can assure people that the Canon - overwhelmingly so - is the result of what artists have determined. We say a work is important, is canonical, because artists following it were influenced by it. We have this beautiful cascading tradition of influence.

But that's another part of the Philistinism of current education to believe that there are these external reasons for why a work lasts, why a work written five hundred years ago or a thousand years ago has global relevance.

Peterson: As if it's some sort of political conspiracy that's based on power. As if anybody could even manage that, no matter how nefarious they were.

Paglia: But also, we in the sixties had the idea that there was this human sensibility that transcended individual nations and so on. And that there was this like rubric for cosmic consciousness, this sense of the universe as a whole, and to see the human being in relationship to great, eternal principles of life, death, mortality, and so on.

Whereas Marxism is blind. Marxism is very narrow. All it sees is a society. It sees nothing beyond society. It doesn't see nature. It's absolutely mad. How you can have a system being taught in universities, which thinks that this tiny thing of society - compared to the enormity and beauty of nature - should take all of our. . . Absorb all of our energy and attention.

I just think that there's a parochialism and provincialism and, now, a kind of systematized elitism in our current education has got to be rooted out. I want to return to basics, great simplicities. All these faculty members teaching their little tiny courses that has to do with their own specialty - that's got to stop.

People can pursue whatever they want in their private research as scholars. Certainly, that's necessary. But they must teach in the core curriculum. And people must decide what is crucial for an educated person to know. I do want a multicultural. . . I do want a global curriculum. I want all the cultures taught.

This is not the answer. Marxism, this neo-Marxism in the universities is simply. . . It's lazy. It's a lazy way to assert multiculturalism without actually doing the research and the study of other cultures.

Peterson: That's a good one to close on.